

## Racist ex-soldier admits tying pig's head to mosque gates and daubing offensive graffiti in attack on Muslims

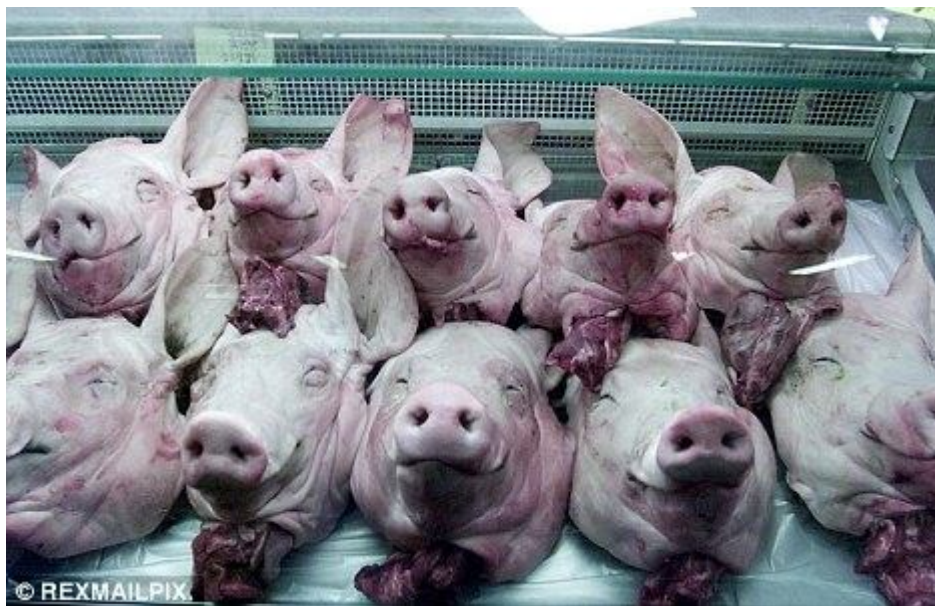
- **Simon Parkes, 45, strapped severed head to the front of Cheltenham Mosque in Gloucestershire**
- **He evaded justice for almost two years before being caught last month**
- **Parkes due to be sentenced at Gloucester Crown Court later this month**
- **Mosque: 'This was a very shocking incident'**

By [Rob Preece](#)

A former soldier has admitted tying a pig's head to the gates of a mosque and spraying racist graffiti.

Simon Parkes, 45, strapped the severed head to the front of Cheltenham Mosque, in Gloucestershire, and daubed offensive messages nearby.

His act was particularly offensive to Muslims, who consider pigs and the eating of pork to be unclean.



Offensive: Former soldier Simon Parkes admitted tying a pig's head to a mosque in Cheltenham. (File photograph)

He evaded justice for almost two years until police finally arrested him for the sick acts and an unrelated offence in July this year.

Parkes, of Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, today appeared at Cheltenham Magistrates' Court and admitted a charge of racially aggravated criminal damage and a public order offence.

He is due to be sentenced at Gloucester Crown Court later this month.

The head was left tied to the mosque on November 13, 2010.

A spokesman for Cheltenham Mosque said: 'This was a very shocking incident, not just for those who attend the mosque but the wider community as well.

'We would like to thank the police, the council and local neighbours for their tremendous amount of support.



Adjourned: Parkes is due to be sentenced at Gloucester Crown Court

'We are very grateful that the damage was dealt with quickly so everyone was able to move back to normality as soon as possible.'

Gloucestershire Police said Parkes had been brought to justice following a 'painstaking and difficult' investigation.

Inspector Tim Waterhouse said: 'Although this disturbing incident happened nearly two years ago a painstaking and difficult enquiry has led to the conviction of Parkes.

'The message is clear - commit crime at your peril in Cheltenham as we will not stop in our determination to target criminals and keep people and our communities safe from harm.'